

# The initiation of the 1728 Musin rebellion

ASSURANCES, THE FIFTH-COLUMNISTS AND MILITARY RESOURCES



View of Sangdang mountain fortress, (Sangdangsansǒng) seized and held by Yi Injwa's rebels in 1728

## THE CENTRAL PROBLEM: THE TIMING OF THE MUSIN REBELLION

In 1728, a rebel organization launched the largest military rebellion of the eighteenth-century in an attempt to overthrow King Yǒngjo's 英祖 government.<sup>1</sup> During the Musin rebellion 戊申亂 (Yi Injwa's rebellion 李麟佐의亂), the government lost control of thirteen county seats to the rebel organisation, including Ch'ǒngju 淸

州 and Sangdang sansǒng mountain fort 上黨山城 in Ch'ungch'ǒng province, and other parts of Kyǒnggi and South Kyǒngsang provinces. In these areas, the rebel organisation killed local officials, installed their own magistrates, and expanded its army thanks to local popular support. Despite a short period of gains, the rebel challenge was brutally crushed by government suppression forces within three weeks.

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The rebel organisation was led by extremist members of Namin 南人 (Southerners) and Chunso 峻少 Soron 少論 (Young Disciples) factions.<sup>2</sup> The political links of the rebel organisation are strong evidence that the roots of the Musin rebellion lie partly in the bloody court factional conflicts that erupted between 1689 and the late 1720s. These conflicts arose over whether Kyŏngjong 景宗 or his younger half-brother Yŏngjo was the most suitable candidate to succeed their father Sukchong 肅宗; later clashes arose over Kyŏngjong's controversial death.<sup>3</sup> The Musin rebellion erupted just a few months after the 1727 removal of the Noron 老論 (Old Disciple) faction from political power and the restoration of the Soron to office (Chŏngmihwan'guk 丁未換局<sup>4</sup>); Yŏngjo's attempt to mollify the type of factionalism that had afflicted his brother's court.<sup>5</sup> Many Soron, removed from office or exiled, were restored to military and civil posts in the capital and provinces. The 1727 Soron restoration means that many Musin rebels were, in fact, rebelling to seize power from their *own* faction.<sup>6</sup> But factional conflict is not the whole story; something more was required for violence on such a level. Factionalism had often been bloody, and there had been periodic crises; for example the 1659 and 1674 rites disputes.<sup>7</sup> However, this is one rare example where factional conflict, which had dominated the Chosŏn court for over two centuries, broke down into open and widespread armed conflict.<sup>8</sup>

## SCHOLARLY UNDERSTANDING OF THE MUSIN REBELLION

Most scholars recognise that the Musin rebellion was more than an extension of factionalism and account for the eruption of violence by emphasizing, not a unitary political crisis in court, but a dual political and structural crisis. The explanations of these scholars are remarkably similar to those found in Chalmers Johnson's structural (systems/value-consensus) theory of rebellion. According to Johnson's theory, balanced societies have values that synchronize and 'routinize' the population into coherent roles and maintain order.<sup>9</sup> However, the equilibrium of institutions and values in society are significantly destabilised after some form of 'shock' to the system or crisis point. These shocks to the system can occur as a result of internal conflict, or external threat.<sup>10</sup> The result of the crisis is an increasing sense of 'disorientation' amongst members of society.<sup>11</sup> In order for a successful rebellion to develop there needs to be a movement centred around ideologies containing 'programs of action intended to achieve resynchronization,' and en masse recruitment of followers.<sup>12</sup> In other words, a successful rebellion is created by an ideological movement. 'Disequilibrated conditions' make 'men receptive to ideologies,' and without ideology the various rebel groups will fail to influence directly the 'social structure.'<sup>13</sup> The systems/value-consensus approach also stresses the self-preservation ability of political systems to respond to systemic changes; in other words, governments can correct imbalances in

2 In addition to the extreme Chunso, the Soron had a more moderate sub-faction Wanso 緩少. For major differences in their attitudes towards opposing factions, see Andrew Jackson, "The causes and aims of Yŏngjo's Chŏngmihwan'guk," in BAKS (British Association of Korean Studies) Papers 13 (2011) pp.17-34.

3 In this article, for the sake of convenience I use the posthumous titles of Kyŏngjong and Yŏngjo rather than other titles. Different factions clashed over the successor to Sukchong. The Namin and Soron supported Kyŏngjong and Noron supported Yŏngjo, and the different factions attacked the legitimacy of the chosen candidate of rival factions; the idea was that if their candidate took the throne they would be in a favourable position in government. Kyŏngjong died after eating crab and persimmon allegedly sent by his brother, who was implicated in Kyŏngjong's death. Yŏngjo had also been implicated by pro Kyŏngjong factions in plots to kill and overthrow his brother; notably, the Lady Kim memorial (Kim Sŏng gung'inso 金姓宮人疏); for more in-depth analysis of this conflict see Jackson, "The causes and aims Yŏngjo's Chŏngmihwan'guk."

4 Chŏngmi refers to the year 1727 and hwan'guk means change of administration.

5 When Yŏngjo took the throne in the eighth month of 1724, he was immediately jettisoned into a problematic relationship with the Soron and Noron and their vendetta politics that threatened the stability and legitimacy of Yŏngjo's rule. The 1727 Soron restoration has to be understood in the context of an ongoing attempt by Yŏngjo to reduce factionalism. The 1727 Soron restoration was probably a short-term means (a temporary exclusion of the Noron) to a long-term end (a joint Noron-Soron administration). Yi Chae-ho claims the aim was to split the power of the Noron and Soron. Yi Chae-ho 이재호, *Chosŏn chŏngch'i chedo yŏn'gu* 조선정치제도연구 (Seoul 서울: Ilchogak 일조각, 1994): p., 229. Yŏngjo probably also hoped to win the cooperation of the Soron, prevent attacks on his legitimacy, and stabilise his throne. This was a rational attempt to make government function in both the short and long term.

6 The Soron loyalists who fought on the government side were mainly Wanso like Ō Myŏnghang, while many in the rebel side were Chunso Soron. There were kinship links between some of the Soron fighting on opposite sides of the conflict. This fratricidal aspect to the Musin rebellion is mainly significant because many Soron loyalists were never able to shake off their association with rebels.

7 Mark Setton, "Factional Politics and Philosophical Development in the Late Chosŏn," *The Journal of Korean Studies* 8 (1992) pp: 37-79. For in-depth analysis see JaHyun Kim Haboush, "Constructing the Center: The Ritual Controversy and the Search for a New Identity in Seventeenth-Century Korea," in *Culture and the state in late Chosŏn Korea*, edited by J. K. Haboush, and Martina Deuchler (Cambridge: Harvard-Hallam, 1999) pp.46-91.

8 The other example was the overthrow of Prince Kwang'hae by the predecessors to the Noron faction, the Sŏ'in or Westerners faction, in 1623, see Andrei Lankov, "Controversy over Ritual in 17th Century Korea," *Seoul Journal of Korean Studies* 3 (1990) pp. 49-64.

9 Chalmers Johnson, *Revolutionary Change* (London: Unipress, 1968): p.35.

10 Ibid., p.61.

11 Theda Skocpol, *Social revolutions in the modern world, Cambridge studies in comparative politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994): pp. 104-5.

12 Ibid., p.84.

13 Johnson, quoted in Skocpol, *Social revolutions in the modern world*, p.105.



systems to prevent occurrences of violence.<sup>14</sup>

1980's *minjung* (oppressed peoples) movement scholars, Yi Chongbŏm, and Chŏng Sŏkchong carried out the most in-depth analysis of the Musin rebellion.<sup>15</sup> Yi and Chŏng stress key aspects of the systems/value consensus theory including the notion of a systemic breakdown, an increasing sense of disorientation and the ideological movement.<sup>16</sup> These scholars see various reasons for the structural crisis: an extrinsic structural shock, internal political and social conflict during a period of economic and agricultural development. Chŏng Sŏkchong believes the 1592-8 Hideyoshi and 1627-37 Manchu invasions set in motion this period of destabilisation.<sup>17</sup> Yi Chongbŏm identifies political imbalances, particularly the 1710 rise of the Noron, which resulted in increasingly vicious Noron/Soron factional conflict. Factionalism paralysed government and failed to prevent social dislocation.<sup>18</sup> During economic expansion, conditions actually worsened for the *minjung* who became discontented and disorientated. The total result of these social changes, according to scholars, is systemic change, or the 'breakdown of feudal society'.<sup>19</sup> For these scholars, the Musin rebel organisation was led by a coalition of elites, some of whom had forward-thinking ideas and were able to mobilise 'disorientated' elites and non-elites.<sup>20</sup>

The structural approach is persistent because it answers the question of why the rebellion was more than factional conflict, and it is consistent with a teleological



View of Sangdang mountain fort, with Ch'ŏngju in distance

view of Korean history. Such an approach positions the Musin rebellion in the context of the development of Korea towards modernity. For Yi Chongbŏm, the Musin rebellion is important, not so much for the fact of the rebellion itself, but for what the rebellion says about the direction in which an increasingly destabilised Korean system was heading. The rebellion failed because it came at an immature stage of development; the ideology of rebel leaders was not forward-thinking enough and non-elites were not sufficiently disorientated. The Musin rebellion is a temporary bridging stage to a later time when more effective challenges could be mounted by the *minjung* movement.<sup>21</sup> This time comes in the nineteenth century, which sees increasingly violent rebellions (1811, 1862, 1894) that contribute to the eventual collapse of the Chosŏn dynasty.<sup>22</sup> The fate of the Chosŏn dynasty system

14 Barbara Salert, *Revolutions and revolutionaries: four theories* (New York: Elsevier, 1976): p. 11.

15 The *minjung* movement privileged the role of the *minjung* in leading late Chosŏn society to modernity.

16 These scholars never acknowledge Johnson, so it appears that they have arrived at their own version of Johnson's theory through their own research. Many other Musin rebellion scholars like Cho Ch'anyong 조찬용, *1728 nyŏn Musinsat'ae koch'al* 1728 년 무신사태 고찰 (Seoul: iolive, 2003) and Kŏch'anggunsa p'yŏnch'an wiwŏnhoe 거창군사 편찬위원회, *Kŏch'anggunsa* 거창郡史, (Kŏch'anggun, Kŏch'anggun munhwawŏn 거창군문화원 1997): 558-613, argue for a regional dynamic behind the violence, but all largely adopt a structural approach in their analysis.

17 Chŏng Sŏkchong 정석중, "Yŏngjo Musillan'ui chinhaenggwa kŭ sŏngkyŏk 영조 무신란의 진행과 그 성격," in *Chosŏn hugi'ui chŏngch'i'wa sasang* 조선 후기의 정치와 사상' (Seoul: Han'gilsa 한길사, 1994): pp. 119-171.

18 Yi Chongbŏm 이종범, "1728 nyŏn 'musillan'ui sŏngkyŏk 1728 년 무신란의 성격," in *Chosŏn sidae chŏngch'i sa'i chaejomyŏng* 조선 시대 정치사의 재조명 edited by Yi Taejin 이태진 (Seoul: T'aehaksa 대학사, 2003) pp. 228 & 283-9.

19 Susan Shin, "Economic Development And Social Mobility in Pre-Modern Korea: 1600-1860," *Peasant Studies* 7 (3) (1978) pp. 187-97.

20 Chŏng Sŏkchong, "Yŏngjo Musillan'ui chinhaenggwa kŭ sŏngkyŏk," pp. 164-5. George Rudé uses the term 'forward-thinking' to indicate ideas of social emancipation or the rights of man. George F.E. Rudé, *The Crowd in History: A Study of Popular Disturbances in France and England, 1730-1848* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1985): p. 234.

21 Ibid. 1997, p. 209.

22 The 1811 Hong Kyŏngnae 洪景來 rebellion, the 1862 Chinju 晋州 rebellion, the 1894 Tonghak 東學 rebellion.

was inevitable because the government is incapable of correcting the destabilised system.<sup>23</sup>

There are notable problems with this approach; for example, there is much rebel testimony in the *sillok* and other sources, but scholarly explanations for the initiation of the rebellion are barely supported by rebel testimony.<sup>24</sup> While there may have been a structural crisis, rebels never discuss an unravelling class system, an economic crisis, or a lack of confidence in the government. In other words, there is little in Musin rebel testimony that might lead us to conclude any kind of structural crisis caused violence in 1728. Another problem is the notion of the extrinsic shocks to the system; with many intervening incidents between the 1592/1710 crisis points and the rebellion, it is difficult to link the crises and the 1728 violence. In addition, if systemic breakdown and permanent social disequilibrium resulted from certain crisis points, and structural scholars deny the ability of the government to correct the imbalances, then why was there a sole outbreak of violence in 1728, why not after? Finally, very little in rebel words (either spoken or in propaganda) or deeds can lead us to assume the rebels had a forward-thinking agenda and scholars struggle to present a convincing case that the Musin rebel leadership was progressive. Rebels expressed their discontent with

the incumbent king and expressed their suspicions over the demise of Kyŏngjong, but there is no evidence of a plan for the radical overhaul of society.<sup>25</sup> The focus in rebel discourse is organizational; in other words, rebels discussed how they were organising to take power, how they would recruit, how they would defeat the government.

I analyse textual evidence from government records using Charles Tilly's political conflict approach, which is well-suited to answering the question of why the Musin rebellion occurred in 1728. Tilly developed many of his ideas partly as a response to perceived failings in Johnson's systems/consensus explanation of rebellion, ideas Tilly continued to develop until his death in 2008. The political conflict approach begins with the assumption that rebel contenders for power are ever present in political systems, and that the central problem of interpretative frameworks is to explain *when*, *how* and *why* contenders escalate political conflict into violent conflict. Rather than focussing on abstract notions of systemic change to explain the outbreak of violence, the political conflict approach can be used to examine organisational variables like mobilisation that are essential to the initiation of rebellion. In my analysis, I focus on testimony about the composition of the rebel leadership, their plans for a military assault on Yŏngjo's court and consider this information in relation to the political context around 1728.

I use government records such as the *sillok*, 英祖實錄, *Kamnannok* 勘亂錄, *Musin yŏgok ch'uan* 戊申逆獄推案 and unofficial histories like the *Yakp'amallok* 藥坡漫錄. These sources are rich with information about rebel military strategy, recruitment drives and links between rebels since these were essential concerns of the government interrogators.<sup>26</sup> Overall, my analysis suggests a different reason for the initiation of violence.



View of P'yoch'ungsa shrine to officials killed by Yi Injwa's rebels in Ch'ŏngju

<sup>23</sup> Yi Chongbŏm, "1728 nyŏn 'musillan' ūi sŏngkyŏk," pp. 216. Chŏng Sŏkchong and Yi Chongbŏm differ from Johnson in their belief that governments are incapable of 'resynchronizing' society and averting revolutionary situations. They also emphasize the importance of a growth of a resistance consciousness amongst the minjung in creating rebellion.

<sup>24</sup> Scholars very rarely take their evidence for structural change from the mouths of Musin rebels. See Yi Chongbŏm, "1728 nyŏn 'musillan' ūi sŏngkyŏk," pp. 215-228.

<sup>25</sup> For more on Musin rebel ideology see Andrew Jackson, "Rebel ideology in the Musin rebellion of 1728," *Cahiers d'études Coréennes 8 Mélanges offerts à Marc Orange et Alexandre Guillemoz* (Institut d'études Coréennes, Collège de France, 2010) pp. 221-31.

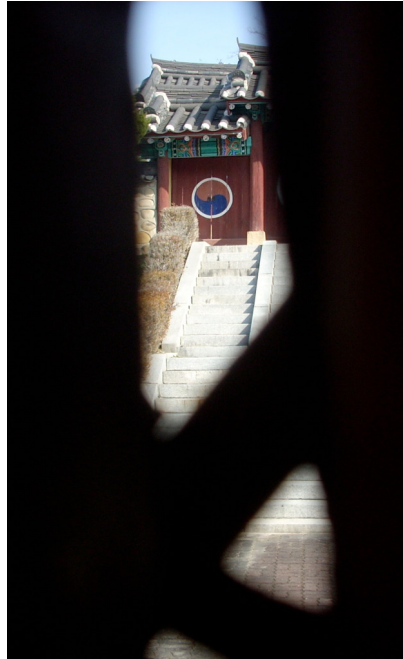
<sup>26</sup> This information was vital because an understanding of how the rebels mobilised, and prepared for battle may have helped the government prevent further outbreaks of violence. The rebel testimony I analyse is found in heavily edited official sources like the *sillok* (veritable records) and the *Kamnannok* (the official record of the rebellion), but also the *Musin yŏgok ch'uan* (Trial record of the Musin rebels) that contain 'unfiltered' interrogations of rebels. The *Yakp'amallok* is a Noron-penned diary of the period.



## OPERATIONAL SECURITY, THE REBELS AND ASSURANCES

An analysis of rebel testimony reveals a curious contradiction in rebel strategies over secrecy. There are many examples of absolute secrecy between rebels at rebel meetings; for example, rebels confessed that at meetings rebel leaders concealed their names, and some only used their childhood appellations (cha 字) to disguise their identities.<sup>27</sup> In addition, under interrogation one rebel claimed he had only known the identities of a few other rebels and had been warned not to reveal the names of his brothers.<sup>28</sup> Senior rebel leader Yi Sasöng 李思晟 also talked about a rebel strategy of not revealing the identities of fellow conspirators at meetings.<sup>29</sup> However, rebels also testified that at other meetings rebel leaders openly revealed apparently sensitive information. Testimony A reveals how one rebel came to join the rebel organisation's military campaign:

Testimony A ...Chöng Seyun 鄭世胤 is my cousin, and this year in the third month, he came to my house claiming to be in mourning... While we were sleeping, four men all eight ch'ök (over two metres) tall and carrying big swords came into the room from somewhere, and I got scared. Chöng Seyun said, 'We have certain plans, and if you don't do as we say, then we will kill you.' I replied, 'How can you say something like that?' Chöng said, 'We have plotters working in the capital [inside court] and in the provinces, and you shouldn't be the least bit worried or suspicious. The court plotter is Nam T'aejing 南泰徵 and Yi Sasöng is plotting in the provinces, and we are going to win. I've come with agreements from the T'aein 泰仁 magistrate [Pak P'ilhyön 朴弼顯] ...'<sup>30</sup>



Interior of P'yoch'ungsa shrine to officials killed by Yi Injwa's rebels at Ch'öngju

There are other such examples of testimony where rebels deliberately dispensed with good operational security and revealed sensitive aspects about their plotting. One rebel confessed he was threatened with a sword, told the T'aein (north Chölla province, Pak P'ilhyön) magistrate was raising troops, and encouraged to join the rebellion.<sup>31</sup> In testimony B, we are told that one rebel leader had boasted about the important and powerful people who were involved in the rebellion:

Testimony B: *At the time I was in T'aein, there was someone called Chöng with a big face, whiskers, and hair turning grey at the temples, and he called himself licentiate*

*Chöng from Karwön 葛院. He visited me and said, 'Nam T'aejing, Yi Sasöng, Pak P'ilmong 朴弼夢, his son and Yi Yuik 李有翼 are all in on this [rebellion] as well as the commander of the Northern Approaches Kim Chunggi, since he is related to Yi Yuik 李有翼 by marriage.'*<sup>32</sup>

There are commonalities to these interactions between rebels in terms of the function of these exchanges and their content. Rebels appear to be offering assurances of victory to other rebels and reveal sensitive details about the identity of those men who would be playing the most significant roles in the victory. In other words, rebels offered other rebels assurances of success in the rebellion by revealing their trump cards- the identity of senior rebels who would be leading the attack.

Elizabeth Perry, in her study of both pre-modern and modern regional rebellions in China, states that assurances are a very important way rebel leaders ready rebel organisations for conflict. One of the primary tasks of rebel leadership is to solidify and expand the rebel organ-

27 *Yöngjo sillok* 英祖實錄 (hereafter YS) 42 04/05/01 (sinhae) 18:1b-3a, edited by Kuksa p'yönch'an wiwönhoe 국사편찬위원회 (Seoul 서울: Tonggukmunhwasa 東國文化社, 1955) pp.52-3 (which refers to the forty-second volume of the modern day printed set of the *Yöngjo sillok* edited by Kuksa p'yönch'an wiwönhoe, which is from the original *sillok* volume eighteen, the fourth year of Yöngjo's reign, the fifth month, the first or sinhae day, '1b-3a' refers to the folio number and position on the page. This can also be found on pages 52-3 of the modern version).

28 Cho Tonggyu 趙東奎; YS 42 04/05/09 (kimi) 18:9b-10a, pp.56-7.

29 YS 42 04/03/25 (ülhae) 16:27b-29a, p.27-28. In addition, rebel leaders with loose tongues were criticised by other rebels *Musin yögokch'uan* 戊申逆獄推案, in *Kaksa tūngnok* 各事登錄 75, edited by Kuksa p'yönch'an wiwönhoe 국사편찬위원회 (Seoul 서울: Kuksa p'yönch'an wiwönhoe, 1994):p.154-5, hereafter, *Musin yögokch'uan* 75, 04/03/25 pp.154-5.

30 Söng Tūkha's 成得夏 confession; YS 42 04/05/09 (kimi) 18:10a-b, p.57.

31 Yi Hanch'o's 李漢楚 confession; YS 42 04/05/09 (kimi) 18:10a-b, p.57.

32 The rebel leader is probably Chöng Seyun; YS 42 04/05/21 (sinmi) 18:17a-b, p.60.

isation by bolstering the confidence of success of potential members. Rebel leaders need to help create the conditions in which rebels find 'it in their individual interests to allocate resources to their common interests...';<sup>33</sup> so leaders use assurances, incentives, or coercion.<sup>34</sup> Perry's research indicates assurances are effective strategies employed by rebel leaders to transform locally based groups into rebel organisations capable of operating on a larger national scale.<sup>35</sup>

The exposure of sensitive information about the identity of senior rebels appears to be evidence the Musin rebel leadership was providing assurances to convince other rebels of the imminent success of their plans. Even when rebel leaders dropped their guard there was a deliberative, purposeful aspect to the widespread exposure of names and information about the military strategy as in testimony C:

Testimony C: *Me (Im Hwan 任環) and Yi Yuik knew each other. Yi Yuik lured me into this evil plot. As for the kind of person he was, if he didn't drink alcohol he was strong-willed and coarse, and he didn't say much. But when he drank his favourite alcohol, and he was with people who felt the same, then he revealed his innermost feelings, and he always talked about Nam T'aejing and Yi Saju 李思周 who were plotting in court (in the capital).*<sup>36</sup>

Even while drunk, the rebel leader above revealed the names of senior rebels to lure other rebels deeper into the plotting.

Assurances are often used in slightly different contexts; for example, as a recruitment device in testimony A. This rebel was coerced into committing to the rebel organization's violent ambitions with a mixture of threats of violence and assurances of senior rebels. In addition, assurances were used between rebels when one lacked confidence as in testimony D:

Testimony D: *Around the second or third month, Han*

*Sehong 韓世弘 came to the house of Yi Yuik and said, 'We don't have enough troops on the inside [in the capital] what are we going to do about it?' Yi Yuik said, 'Commander Yi and General Nam are enough. We don't need that many.' After Han Sehong left, because I had no idea who Commander Yi was, I asked Yi Yuik, and Yi Yuik replied with a laugh, 'It's Yi Saju.' Yi Yuik said Yi Saju was related to Lord Milp'ung 密豐君, and had just been made the commander of the elite palace guard.*<sup>37</sup>

The timing of this incident, which was just prior to the takeover of Ch'ŏngju, suggests last minute nerves about the commitment of rebels to the rebellion. But in the majority of cases, higher ranking rebels used the names of senior leaders to assure lower ranking rebels. What is common to all these uses of assurances is a desire to reassure rebel misgivings about what was a dangerous enterprise. This use of assurances can help explain the apparent contradiction in the rebel practice of operational security.

#### REBEL LEADERSHIP AND THE FIFTH-COLUMNISTS

The frequent use of assurances amongst rebels explains how sensitive information about the identity of the leadership and the military strategy was widespread amongst even lower ranking rebels. When arrested, tortured and interrogated, many rebels revealed names and rebel strategies to their interrogators. Betrayed in interrogations were rebel leaders whose names have become synonymous with the rebellion like Yi Injwa and Pak P'ilmong. All of these men were Namin or Chunso marginalised elites, men from famous clans excluded from power because of factionalism.

However as can be seen in the above examples, in addition to these marginalised elite rebels, frequently mentioned were military and civil officials occupying senior positions in court and the provinces. These men were operating undercover within government and therefore acting as fifth-columnists,<sup>38</sup> and they include central government officials Yi Sasŏng, Nam T'aejing, Kim Chunggi,

<sup>33</sup> Elizabeth J. Perry, *Rebels and revolutionaries in North China, 1845-1945*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980): p. 253.

<sup>34</sup> Daniel Little, *Understanding peasant China: case studies in the philosophy of social science* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989): pp. 145-50.

<sup>35</sup> Elizabeth Perry, *Rebels and revolutionaries in North China*, pp. 175-80.

<sup>36</sup> YS 42 04/05/01 (sinhae) 18:1b-3a, pp.52-3.

In addition, Yi Yuik claimed that Yi Saju would be involved on the rebel side YS 42 04/05/02 (imja) 18:4a, p.54.

<sup>37</sup> Im Hwan's 任環 confession YS 42 04/05/02 (imja) 18:4a, p.54.

<sup>38</sup> The term was originally used in relation to the Spanish Civil War; Nationalist general Emilio Mola Vidal said he had four columns of a rebel army attacking government forces, and a fifth-column of clandestine rebels inside government. Although a very different temporal, geographical and political context, 'fifth-columnist' seems the most appropriate term to describe rebels clandestinely using their official positions to aid a rebel challenge to government.



Sangdang mountain fortress, near Ch'ŏngju, captured by rebels

and Yi Saju.<sup>39</sup> Yi Sasŏng was P'yŏng'an 平安 army commander, a powerful military official charged with defence against northern invaders. Nam T'aejing was Chief of the Capital Gendarmes. Kim Chunggi occupied the most powerful position of anyone accused of collaboration with the Musin rebel organization. Kim was commander of the Northern approaches and in direct command of an army responsible for protecting the king, court, and capital from outside attack. As an official he gave advice on the suppression of the rebels; he was close to the king and the inner circle of officials during the 1728 crisis and was present in the king's emergency council when details about the rebellion were first revealed to the court. Yi Saju served as general of the elite palace guard, a key position responsible for protecting the king and the capital.<sup>40</sup>

The above confessions also reveal the names of provincial officials like Pak P'ilhyŏn the T'aein magistrate

(Ch'ŏlla province), Shim Yuhyŏn 沈維賢 the Tamyang 潭陽 magistrate (Ch'ŏlla province), Nam T'aejŏk 南泰績 the T'ongjin 通津 (Kyŏnggi province) magistrate, Nam Su'ŏn 南壽彦 the Ch'ip'yŏng 砥平 magistrate and Ch'ŏng Sahyo 鄭思孝 the Ch'ŏlla province governor. Many were associated with the higher echelons of the central rebel leadership; for example, Pak P'ilhyŏn was a founder member of the rebel organisation. There were also a large number of more minor provincial officials implicated, and used as assurances by rebels. These men were not those opportunists who switched sides and joined the rebels when it was evident the rebels were in the ascendancy at a local level.<sup>41</sup> These men were implicated as provincial fifth-columnists prior to the start of the rebellion and included Shin Husam 愼後三, Cho Munbo 趙文普, and Han Saŏk 韓師億.<sup>42</sup> According to rebel leaders, all of the above regional fifth-columnists had pledged their support to the rebellion.

The above information means that the rebel organisation had a small but significant group of fifth-columnist rebels allegedly working undercover in both military and civil posts, in central and provincial government, and this information was widely known by rebels throughout the rebel organisation prior to the outbreak of violence.

## THE MILITARY PLAN

These fifth-columnists are frequently mentioned in assurances with regard to the military plan as in testimony A, B, C and D. The main crux of this plan involved the creation of a diversion, so fifth-columnist military generals like Yi Sasŏng could attack the court. Rebel troops planned to create a 'disturbance' in a strategic location near the capital. Yi Sasŏng would then mobilise his government troops in the name of the king to crush the disturbances, but in fact, Yi Sasŏng's troops would be diverted to the capital to join with other rebel troops and seize control of court.<sup>43</sup> In addition to Yi Sasŏng, Nam T'aejing would be playing a vitally important role in the rebel military takeover. Lower-ranking rebels testified that the Chief of the

<sup>39</sup> The charges that Kim Chunggi, Ch'ŏng Sahyo and Yi Saju were fifth-columnists were never universally accepted. However, the names of these officials were used by rebels as assurances guaranteeing success in the rebellion. Kim Chunggi is identified as a rebel fifth-columnist in other sources, see *Musin yŏgokch'uan* 75, 04/03/25 p. 167; the *Yakp'ammallok* mentions that Kim Chunggi's name appeared in rebel confessions and then he was arrested and replaced *Yakp'ammallok* p. 6 lines 68-9 (author's pagination).

<sup>40</sup> Records indicate that Yi Saju was made the general of the gendarmes on the fifteenth day of the second month of 1728, but it is unclear when he took up his post.

<sup>41</sup> *Musin yŏgokch'uan* 75, 04/04/17 p. 599

<sup>42</sup> Like Shin Manhang 愼萬恒 the Samga 三嘉 deputy magistrate (Chwasu 座首) who chased the magistrate out of town and sided with the Hapch'ŏn 陝川 rebels; *YS* 42 04/03/27 (ch'ŏngch'uk) 16:35a-36a, p. 31.

<sup>43</sup> See *YS* 04/06/17 (pyŏngsin) 18:26b, p. 65/42 & *YS* 04/04/10 (kyŏng'in) 17:13a-b, p. 41/42 & *Musin yŏgokch'uan* 75, 04/04/16 p. 580. Further testimony that Pak P'ilhyŏn as magistrate mobilised his T'aein government troops for the rebels can be found in *Musin yŏgokch'uan* 75, 04/04/07 pp. 392-3. Pak P'ilhyŏn is also described as a rebel leader in *Kamnannok* 勘亂錄 from *Chosŏn Tangaeng kwangyeja charyojip* 朝鮮黨爭關係資料集 accessed online at <http://www.krpa.co.kr/pcontent/?svcid=KR&proid=68> [accessed 1<sup>st</sup> May 2012]: p. 48a-b.



Capital Gendarmes Nam T'aejing was charged with the task of seizing the capital.<sup>44</sup> Rebel leaders confessed that Nam would be leading the capital rebellion and would hold the capital to give Yi Sasöng time to bring his government troops down from P'yöng'an Province.

Testimony E: *Shin Yunjo will enter from Tongdaemun 東大門 gate, and Yi Sasöng will come from the western road, and Nam T'aejing's troops will rise up from inside the city and start firing.*<sup>46</sup>

There are some variations; for example, one rebel leader predicted disturbances in the capital as well, which Nam T'aejing would pretend to suppress.<sup>47</sup> This means both Yi Sasöng and Nam T'aejing would crush 'disturbances' inside, and close to the capital. It is unclear who would be causing these capital disturbances; however, rebels mentioned a plan to infiltrate the capital at night by sabotaging a gate.<sup>48</sup>

The use of diversion and the Yi Sasöng/Nam T'aejing assault on the capital appears to have been the basis of the rebel organization's strategy. There is evidence that the rebels attempted to implement this military strategy. When Yi Injwa seized the town of Ch'öngju, he attempted to activate the 'government' response of Yi Sasöng. Yi Injwa's first action after the takeover was to send out appeals for support from Yi Sasöng, and other rebel leaders as we see in Testimony F:<sup>49</sup>

*On the evening of the fourteenth, I arrived at Ch'öngju. Kwön Söryong and Yi Injwa had led their troops from town and stationed them in a valley around five li away.*

*On the evening of the fifteenth day, Yi Injwa was made commander and Chöng Seyun vice-commander, and they led the troops into Ch'öngju, killing the military commander. [...] When I was with the rebels, I drew up three rebel appeals (kyöksö 檄書). One was sent to Chöng Hüiryang 鄭希亮 in Kyöngsang Province. Im Kungnyang, who was a strong and robust man from the P'yöng'an commander-in-chief's camp and acting as Yi Injwa's lieutenant, was ordered to take another dispatch to Yi Sasöng. Another one was sent to Honam to Na Manch'i 羅晚致.<sup>50</sup>*

Further evidence that the rebel organization was serious about this plan can be seen in Yi Sasöng's confession where he admitted his intention had been to use rebel movements as an excuse to mobilise government troops.<sup>51</sup> Other fifth-columnists are also mentioned in relation to rebel military success; particularly Nam T'aejök, Kim Chunggi and Yi Saju.<sup>52</sup> Rebels are sketchy about both Yi Saju and Kim Chunggi's precise military involvement, or the resources they would be contributing to the rebellion; there are no details about their involvement in the plan, or whether units of their men would be mobilised. Testimony only indicates that these men would be involved in some way, and acting as generals. Overall, the names of Yi Sasöng and Nam T'aejing are the most frequently betrayed names during the main period of government interrogation. Yi Sasöng and his rebel activities are mentioned in twenty-five different *sillok* confessions; Nam T'aejing is mentioned by fourteen different rebels in confessions, mostly in relation to their assault on the capital.<sup>53</sup>

44 See YS 42 04/04/22 (imin) 17: 26b-28a, pp. 47-48 & YS 42 04/04/22 (imin) 17: 26b-28a, pp. 47-8 & *Musin yögokch'uan* 75, 04/04/14 p. 531. Testimony of Yi Sasöng's military plans can be found in other sources *Musin yögokch'uan* 75, 04/03/18 pp. 71-2. Further evidence that Yi Sasöng's planned mobilisation was used as an assurance can be found in *Kamnannok* p. 27b. One rebel indicated that Yi Sasöng's troops would be disguised as Ching troops, but it is unclear why; perhaps to give the impression that the rebels had Ching backing, see *Musin yögokch'uan* 75, 04/04/16 pp. 579-80.

45 Yi Ha 李河 claimed he was aware that Nam T'aejing was involved. *Musin yögokch'uan* 75, 04/03/18 pp. 75-6, and Yun Hüigyöng 尹熙慶 claimed capital plotting was organised by Nam T'aejing YS 42 04/03/29 (kimyo) 16: 41a, p. 34. Other sources provide testimony about Nam T'aejing's involvement: *Musin yögokch'uan* 76, 04/05/01 p. 103

46 Cho Myönggyu's 趙命奎 confession YS 42 04/06/03 (imo) 18: 21a, p. 62. Rebel leader Na Sungdae also revealed this information *Musin yögokch'uan* 75, 04/04/06 pp. 386-7. Also Yi Injwa revealed that Nam T'aejing was involved in the capital plotting YS 42 04/03/26 (pyöngja) 16: 31b-33a, p. 29-30. Han Sehong confessed Nam would be mobilising gendarmes YS 42 04/04/09 (kich'uk) 17: 11b-12a, p. 40. Shim Yuhyön also had information about Nam T'aejing's proposed movements YS 42 04/05/08 (mu'o) 18: 8b-9b, p. 56. It is difficult to find any more information about the case of Nam T'aejing because Nam was one of the few rebel leaders who refused to confess during interrogation.

47 YS 42 04/05/01 (sinhae) 18: 1b-3a, pp. 52-3.

48 Several different plans were devised by rebel leaders to open the capital gates. For example, Yi Ha claimed that Pak P'ilhyön that the gates of Tonhwamun 敦化門 and Hong'hwamun 弘化門 could be opened using rockets YS 42 04/04/09 (kich'uk) 17: 11b-12a, p. 40.

49 Unbeknownst to Yi Injwa, Yi Sasöng and Nam T'aejing had been arrested.

50 Wön Manju's confession. YS 42 04/05/24 (kapsul) 18: 18a-b, p. 61.

51 Although Yi confessed his government troops would really suppress the rebels, and not attack the crown YS 42 04/03/25 (ülhae) 16: 27b-29a, p. 27-28.

52 Nam T'aejök was a frequently betrayed fifth-columnist. For example, Nam was betrayed by Yi Pae 李培 who alleged that Nam T'aejök was one of the capital plotters alongside Nam T'aejing and Yi Sasöng *Musin yögokch'uan* 75, 04/03/27 pp. 186-7. Nam T'aejök was also betrayed by Kim Chungman 金重萬 and Shin Kwang'wön 慎光遠 YS 42 04/03/18 (mujin) 16: 14a-b, p. 20, Pak P'ilhyön YS 42 04/03/19 (kisa) 16: 15b-17a, p. 21, Pak Migui 朴美龜 YS 42 04/05/08 (mu'o) 18: 8b-9b, p. 56 and Yi Injwa YS 42 04/03/26 (pyöngja) 16: 31b-33a, p. 29-30.

53 YS 42 04/03/25 (ülhae) 16: 29a, p. 28. Both Yi Sasöng and Nam T'aejing were mentioned in relation to their activities as fifth-columnists in a variety of sources also; for example, *Kamnannok* p. 31b-32b, Yi Sasöng is also identified as a fifth columnist in *Musin yögokch'uan* 75, 04/04/10 p. 463 & *Musin yögokch'uan* 75, 04/04/24 pp. 681-2



As can be seen from the above testimony, Yi Sasŏng and Nam T'aejing are invariably placed at the centre of the strategy, and this is particularly significant for two reasons. First, it appears that a large number of rebels were familiar with the Yi Sasŏng/ Nam T'aejing section of the plan; whereas none had any idea of the proposed movements of ordinary rebel leaders like Yi Injwa, or Chŏng Hŭiryang (who were eventually more successful in the rebellion). This is an important detail because it means the Yi Sasŏng/Nam T'aejing assault was widely associated by the rebel leadership as the strategy that would bring victory in the rebellion.<sup>54</sup> Second, there is a degree of consistency about the centrality of Yi Sasŏng and Nam T'aejing to the military plan across rebel testimony. This was testimony induced under duress and compiled by government scribes with a vested factional interest in disparaging the rebel case.<sup>55</sup> However, many rebels corroborate the evidence of other rebels about the participation of the fifth-columnists. The 'overlapping' of these essential details lends some credibility to the information in the records.

### MILITARY RESOURCES OF THE FIFTH-COLUMNISTS

To understand the central role of the rebel fifth-columnists in this plan, it is important to bear in mind the significant military resources rebels believed fifth-columnists would be contributing to the rebel cause. Official figures indicate that Yi Sasŏng would have commanded up to fourteen thousand able-bodied troops.<sup>56</sup> Rebel testimony reveals that Nam T'aejing commanded around four hundred troops.<sup>57</sup> Nam T'aejŏk was supposed to commit three hundred troops.<sup>58</sup> Rebels confessed Pak P'ilhyŏn in



Monument erected in honour of government officials like Yi Pongsang killed by Musin rebel forces at Ch'ŏngju

T'aein led eight companies (almost eight hundred men) from T'aein.<sup>59</sup>

Other fifth-columnists used in these assurances also commanded significant military resources. Kim Chunggi was in charge of between seven thousand and twenty thousand troops.<sup>60</sup> Yi Saju may have commanded anything between seven hundred and a thousand troops. There are also several minor provincial officials like Shin Husam and Han Saŏk<sup>61</sup> who were planning to mobilize unclear numbers of troops.<sup>62</sup>

It is easy to see how the fifth-columnist led military plan would appeal to many rebels as a powerful assurance. First, many fifth-columnists controlled powerful military resources – resources marginalized, rural rebel elites like Yi Injwa could never hope to mobilize. This is because fifth-columnists had access to resources of the most powerful resource holder in the land – the state. By placing fifth-columnists at the centre of the military plan, rebels were essentially tapping into the power of the state. Second, many of the fifth-columnists shared political and kinship links with other rebels.<sup>63</sup> For example, Nam T'aejing was related by marriage to fellow fifth-

<sup>54</sup> This may also indicate that the actual rebel seizure of territory was not the intended course of events but a rebel response to contingency.

<sup>55</sup> Susan Naquin calls this 'overlapping information.' Susan Naquin, *Millenarian Rebellion in China* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1976): p. 286.

<sup>56</sup> *Pipyŏnsa Tŭngnok* 國譯備邊司謄錄 27, edited by Kuksa p'yŏnch'an wiwŏnhoe 국사편찬위원회 (Kwach'ŏn 光文印刷, 2006) YJ 04/05/18 (Mujin) pp.275c-276d.

<sup>57</sup> YS 42 04/05/08 (mu'o) 18:8b-9b, p.56.

<sup>58</sup> *Musin yŏgokch'uan* 75, 04/03/28 p.201

<sup>59</sup> YS 42 04/03/25 (Ŭlhae) 16:27a-b, p.26-27.

<sup>60</sup> YS 42 04/03/17 (chŏngmyŏ) 16:10b-11a, p.18-19.

<sup>61</sup> YS 42 04/04/10 (kyŏng'in) 17:13a-b, p.41.

<sup>62</sup> YS 42 04/06/17 (pyŏngsin) 18:26b, p.65.

<sup>63</sup> YS 42 04/04/10 (kyŏng'in) 17:13b, p.41 & YS 42 04/04/14 (kap'o) 17:20b-21a, pp.44-5.

columnists Pak P'ilhyŏn and Nam T'aejŏk.<sup>64</sup> Both Shim Yuhŏn and Kim Chunggi were related by marriage to one of the founding members of the rebel organisation Yi Yuik;<sup>65</sup> In addition, Yi Saju had marital connections to the figurehead of the rebellion, Lord Milp'ung.<sup>66</sup> These bonds amongst rebels and the fifth-columnists were never questioned in testimony.<sup>67</sup> Third, there was historical precedent for the fifth-columnist led military strategy. A plan based on the use of fifth-columnists and their resources had been used in the previous century during the Injo restoration. In 1623, Sŏin members managed to seize power with around seven thousand troops led by Yi Sŏ 李曙, Yi Chungno 李重老, and with the Military Training commander Yi Hŭngnip 李興立 acting as fifth-columnist.<sup>68</sup> Prince Kwanghae 光海君 was toppled and Injo restored in his place.<sup>69</sup> Thus, the fifth-columnist led military plan had a proven track record.<sup>70</sup> Finally, many rebels expressed their doubts about the capacity of the ordinary rebel leaders and their troops to succeed in the rebellion, but there is no evidence of any criticism or doubts about the capacity of any of the fifth-columnists.<sup>71</sup> Overall, there is strong evidence that the fifth-columnists and their the military plan was generally accepted as the winning rebel strategy.



Map showing county seats seized by Musin rebels

## THE INITIATION OF THE REBELLION

The assurances in testimony A-D are very revealing of the identity of influential members of the rebel organisation, the military strategy, and the way rebels believed they would succeed in the rebellion. When considered within the immediate political context the information from these assurances provides vital clues to the

<sup>64</sup> *Musin yŏgokch'uan* 75, 04/03/22 p.106 & Cho Ch'anyong, 1728 *nyŏn Musinsat'ae koch'al* 1728, p. 156. A similar marriage link was given as evidence that Chŏng Sahyo was involved on the rebel side, since Chŏng was related to Pak P'ilhyŏn *YS* 42 04/04/14 (kabo) 17:20b-21a, pp.44-5) In another example, rebel leaders Na Sungdae and Yi Ho stated Chŏng Sahyo and Pak P'ilhyŏn were plotting together to mobilise troops *Musin yŏgokch'uan* 75, 04/04/05 pp. 386-7.

<sup>65</sup> *Musin yŏgokch'uan* 75, 04/03/27 p. 190. Cho Sang confessed that Kim Chunggi's marriage links to Yi Yuik was evidence of his commitment to the rebellion *YS* 42 04/04/10 (kyŏng'in) 17:13b, p.41. See also *YS* 42 04/03/26 (pyŏngja) 16:31b-33a, p.29-30 & *YS* 42 04/03/25 (ŭlhae) 16:27b-29a, p.27-28. *YS* 42 04/04/11 (sinmyo) 17:14a, p.41.

<sup>66</sup> Rebels planned to put Lord Milp'ung on the throne to replace Yŏngjo and bring legitimacy to the rebellion. Lord Milp'ung was the great-grandson of Sohyŏn, the oldest son of King Injo Yi Kyech'ŏn 2003, 24. The links between other more minor fifth-columnists like Shim Husam, Cho Munbo, and Han Sa'ŏk and the rebel organization are vague. One scholar claims there were political links, Yi Chongbŏm claims that they were all members of extreme Soron or Namin factions (Yi Chongbŏm, "1728 nyŏn 'musillan' ŭi sŏngkyŏk," p. 251) but this cannot be verified in the sources. There could also have been marriage links. It is unlikely that rebel leaders would have approached provincial officials they felt were unsympathetic to the rebel organization.

<sup>67</sup> In actual fact, the loyalty of many fifth-columnists was not so strong and many reneged on agreements to fight for the rebels. Some like Yi Saju even fought against the rebel organisation *YS* 04/03/17 (chŏngmyo) 16:12b, p.19/42.

<sup>68</sup> Yi Hongjik 이홍직, ed. *Kuksadaesajŏn* 國史大辭典 (Seoul, Minjung sŏgwan 民衆書館, 2007): p. 1139.

<sup>69</sup> James Palais, *Confucian Statecraft and Korean Institutions: Yu Hyongwon and the Late Chosŏn Dynasty* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996): pp. 93 & 6.

<sup>70</sup> There is no testimony from the lips of rebels about the Musin rebellion fifth-columnists having used the model of earlier rebels, for example in the Injo restoration. However, the king and his officials compare the actions of Nam T'aejing and Yi Sasŏng to rebels from earlier periods, some of whom had used the fifth-columnist model to mobilize troops against the crown, so we can assume that this military strategy would have been known by the rebels as well. For example, the king compared the activities of Nam T'aejing and Yi Sasŏng to that of the 1624 Yi Kwal 李适 rebellion. *YS* 42 04/04/22 (imin) 17:26b-28a, pp.47-8.

<sup>71</sup> Yi Yurik *YS* 42 04/04/29 (kiyu) 17:34b-35b, pp.51-2), Yi Injwa *YS* 42 04/03/26 (pyŏngja) 16:31b-33a, p.29-30), and Yi Sasŏng *YS* 42 04/03/25 (ŭlhae) 16:27b-29a, p.27-28) all expressed their doubts about the military capacities of non-fifth columnist rebels and/or their troops.

initiation of the rebellion. Many of the fifth-columnists from the 1728 Musin rebellion had been restored to office by Yǒngjo in the 1727 Soron restoration. For example, Nam T'aejing and Kim Chunggi were exiled by the Noron around 1725 and then returned from exile by Yǒngjo in 1727 and given important military posts. Yi Sasǒng was also out of office and restored to a senior post after the 1727 Soron restoration.<sup>72</sup> Pak P'ilhyǒn's career went 'silent' around 1725, but he was back in office after 1727.<sup>73</sup> The timing of the rebellion, a few months after the 1727 Soron restoration when many fifth-columnists were restored to office, may be more than coincidence; there appears to be a direct link. The rebel use of assurances gives clues as to why the rebellion occurred when it did. Many in the rebel organisation believed that thanks to the fifth-columnists, the rebel organisation had acquired sufficient military resources to launch an assault against the largest and most powerful resource holder in the land, Yǒngjo's court.

## CONCLUSION

Previous Musin rebellion scholars recognise more than a political crisis was required to turn factionalism into widespread military violence. However, most scholars sought answers to the question of the initiation of the rebellion from information extrinsic to the textual data and identified systemic crises.

In my study of the initiation of violence I focus on rebel testimony. Thanks to the rebel use of assurances, vital data about the military strategy was quickly betrayed to government interrogators, and this information is revealing about the Musin rebellion. The fifth-columnists were widely claimed by rebels to be playing significant roles in the military plan. The rebel organization was using prime assets like Nam T'aejing and Yi Sasǒng, as well as other rebel fifth-columnists to expand and solidify rebel membership. Many rebels appear convinced that the rebellion would be led by fifth-columnists who could mobilise powerful military resources for the rebels. Put simply, the rebel organization initiated the rebellion because it



Monument commemorating the government suppression of the Musin rebellion in Ansǒng, Kyǒnggi province

believed it had sufficient resources to attack the government. The rebel organization believed it had acquired sufficient resources because the fifth-columnists had come to power, and the fifth-columnists were only in power because of the 1727 Soron restoration.

Placing fifth-columnists and their military resources at the centre of the rebellion provides a more concrete account of the initiation of violence than structural explanations for two reasons. First, this is an explanation that relies on textual evidence from the lips of the rebels themselves. Second, rather than a temporarily remote crisis point that destabilised the system, I see a moment of crisis that fatally unbalanced the political institutions a few months before the outbreak of violence. This is the 1727 Soron restoration, the moment Yǒngjo unwittingly empowered rebel fifth-columnists and the rebel organisation.

But placing the fifth-columnists at the centre of the Musin rebellion also has two important implications. The first is the role of Yǒngjo in creating a military challenge to his own rule. Men, who prior to the 1727 Soron restoration had been in exile or unemployed, were placed in positions they could exploit to launch an attack on the crown. Yǒngjo both literally and figuratively handed the keys of the armoury to fifth-columnist rebels he had restored in the 1727 Soron restoration. Second, to mount a serious attack on the state rebels required resources of the state; forward-thinking ideology was not enough to initiate rebellion against the government.

<sup>72</sup> *Sūngjǒngwǒn'ilgi* 承政院日記35, edited by Kuksa p'yǒnch'an wiwǒnhoe 국사편찬위원회, (Seoul 서울: Op'uset insoeso 서울오프셋印刷所, 1965-6) YJ 03/08/05 (Muja) p.148a.

<sup>73</sup> *Sūngjǒngwǒn'ilgi* 35, YJ 03/11/12 (Kapja) p.562a.



This paints a very different picture of the eruption of violence in 1728. Important political interventions/contingency like the 1727 Soron restoration and organisational factors like fifth-columnist involvement, military strategy and resources have been forgotten in the rush to show that systems were moving societies towards modernity and that these same systems were sending the rebel participants to an inevitable conclusion. These were not participants being propelled to some inevitable rebellion by systemic forces beyond their control. The forces that led to rebellion were firmly in the hands of the participants themselves, in the hands of the rebels and the king.

My study also raises an important point about historical approaches to the Musin rebellion in particular and rebellion in general. In most historical coverage the Musin rebellion is known as Yi Injwa's rebellion, because Yi Injwa played a leading role in the rebel seizures of county seats in Kyōngsang, Ch'ungch'ōng and Kyōnggi provinces. The problem is the focus on the main 'action' of the Musin rebellion provides little or no clue why the Musin rebellion actually occurred in 1728. By focussing on rebel seizures of power, most historical coverage overlooks important forces that lay behind the rebellion; in this case, the military plan, the fifth-columnists, their resources, and the 1727 Soron restoration. In this article, I have argued that to understand why the Musin rebellion occurred when it did, we have to look at what the rebels intended to do rather than what they actually achieved. This raises questions about some of our assumptions underlying complex events like rebellions, where it cannot necessarily be assumed that the path taken was the path chosen. Other researchers like Susan Naquin have also remarked upon the phenomenon of 'unintended consequences' in their studies of eighteenth century Chinese rebellion.<sup>74</sup> Historical researchers armed with such awareness may be able to make fruitful inroads into understanding the causes of other late Chosŏn rebellions.

It is important to note also that the Musin rebellion was not a one-off case and that central aspects of my research can also be seen in different temporal and cultural contexts. In particular, one important strategy for resource mobilisation is evident in other rebellions.

Rebels realised a vital platform for rebellion involved having rebels on the 'inside' or securing coalitions with disaffected members of the polity. In the late Chosŏn Hong Kyōngnae rebellion of 1811, rebels exploited some close connections with local government to mobilise material resources. For instance, many rebels held positions at the Kwaksan county office and some thirty-nine out of forty-three mobilised at Chōngju were clerks or officials in the local administrative structure.<sup>75</sup> Some of these same officials exploited their position within the administrative structure to mobilise troops for the rebels. These fifth-columnist officials were able to identify the able-bodied men of certain villages, and had the administrative authority to mobilise them.<sup>76</sup> In addition to human resources, fifth-columnist officials used were able to seize material resources like grain from local state granaries to help supply the rebels.<sup>77</sup> Thus, rebels exploited local level connections to mobilise government resources against government forces. In the case of the period of internal rebellion against the Ch'ing, the White Lotus Rebellion of 1796 heralded a long period of serious domestic rebellion. Rebels converted wealthy rural elites and also found support within provincial offices to the extent that observers believed most officials 'supposed to ferret out the sect are in fact members of it.'<sup>78</sup> In her study of the Eight Trigrams uprising of 1813, Susan Naquin explains that rebel leaders were reliant upon coalitions with discontents inside court as part of their strategy for victory. Leaders cultivated links with eunuchs and Chinese bondservants as a way of infiltrating and seizing the Forbidden City.<sup>79</sup>

In all the above cases, as in the case of the Musin rebellion, the rebel cultivation of links with fifth-columnists as a way of mobilising resources was not a strategy that succeeded, but did form part of a success-oriented strategy; i.e., a strategy that rebels believed would lead to success. The notion of the fifth-columnist and the fifth-columnist's ability to mobilise state resources for rebels does not explain all the permutations of rebellion. However, an awareness of these issues can help shed some light upon the mechanics of rebellion not only in 1728, but in East Asian rebellion in general.

<sup>74</sup> Susan Naquin, 'Millenarian Rebellion in China,' p.210.

<sup>75</sup> Anders Karlsson, *The Hong Kyōngnae rebellion 1811-1812: conflict between central power and local society in 19th-century Korea*, (Stockholm: Stockholm University, 2000), pp.156 & 183.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 161 & 165.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 191-205.

<sup>78</sup> Philip A. Kuhn, *Rebellion and its enemies in late imperial China: militarization and social structure, 1796-1864*, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1970), p.40.

<sup>79</sup> Susan Naquin, *Millenarian Rebellion in China*, p.148.

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